AN

ABRIDGMENT

OF THE

LETTER

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

EDMUND BURKE

TO A

GENTLEMAN IN PARIS,

ON THE

REVOLUTION IN FRANCE:

"*Whenever our Neighbour's Houſe is on Fire, it cannot be amiſs*
"*for the Engines to play a little on our own.*"
Reflect. on the Rev. p. 20.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages are the reſult of an attempt to compreſs and arrange thoſe arguments, which coming from a great Stateſman, on a momentous and ſeaſonable ſubject, have not failed already to obtain, as they deſerve, an extraordinary ſhare of public attention. However, the Editor underſtands from all quarters, that there ſtill remain a very conſiderable number to whom the ſubſtance would be acceptable in a ſmaller compaſs. Neither is it any impeachment of the admirable original to ſay, what Mr. Burke himſelf has ſaid in the preface, that being written for private uſe, in the form of a letter, the arguments do not, perhaps, follow in that regular order which is beſt adapted to common apprehenſion. When brought into one view, they ſpeak for themſelves, in anſwer to all cavils upon the ſubject; and evince that there exiſts, independently of foreign or queſtionable matter, an entire body of reaſoning proof againſt the attack of heedleſs or partial criticiſm.

Ever ſince the work firſt appeared the National Aſſembly has been confirming its truth; betraying more and more thoſe principles by which the author had proved that they were actuated. Leſt any doubt might remain of their ſuſpected deſign *of aboliſhing the Chriſtian Religion*, by bringing its miniſters into contempt, their laſt proceedings have been perfectly explicit and unequivocal. By a cruel and malicious refinement upon tyranny, they have at length reduced the clergy to this terrible alternative; either with a ſolemn oath to ratify the deſtruction of their church, or to eſcape from its ruins, committing what remains to mercenaries, who having loſt their character, have loſt, when the laſt ſtroke comes to be made, their only principle of ſecurity! The Aſſembly well knows that in ſuch hands Chriſtianity lies entirely at their mercy.

And let the Engliſh reader beware how he conſider himſelf an unconcerned ſpectator: nor when he reads of an intriguing monied intereſt conſpiring with a reſtleſs literary cabal againſt the religion and property of their country, let him ſlight too haſtily that advice of Mr. Burke, "At home we behold "ſimilar beginnings, we ſhould be on our guard "againſt ſimilar concluſions."

AN

ABRIDGMENT, &c.

I. *The conduct of thoſe Clubs in England which have recommended to us the example of France.*

DEAR SIR,

YOU ſee by the Letter that I have tranſmitted to you, that, though I do moſt heartily wiſh that France may be animated by a ſpirit of rational liberty, it is my misfortune to entertain great doubts concerning ſome material points in your late tranſaction.

You imagined, when you wrote laſt, that I might poſſibly be reckoned among the approvers of certain proceedings in France, from the ſolemn public ſeal of ſanction they have received, from two Clubs of Gentlemen in London called the Revolution Society, and the Conſtitutional Society.

For one, I ſhould be ſorry to be thought directly or indirectly concerned in their proceedings.

I ſhould

I ſhould think it at leaſt improper and irregular for me to open *a formal public correſpondence with the actual government of a foreign nation*, without the expreſs authority of the government under which I live.

I ſhould be ſtill more unwilling to enter into that correſpondence, *under any thing like an equivocal deſcription*, which to many unacquainted with our uſages, might make the addreſs in which I joined, appear the act of perſons in ſome ſort of corporate capacity, acknowledged by the laws of this kingdom, and authorized to ſpeak the ſenſe of ſome part of it—a policy that has very much the complection of a fraud.

I muſt be tolerably ſure too, before I venture publicly to congratulate men on a bleſſing, that they have *really* received one. The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they pleaſe. We ought to ſee what it will pleaſe them to do, before we riſque congratulations which may be ſoon turned into complaints.

I ſhould therefore ſuſpend my congratulations on the new liberty of France, until I was informed how it had been combined with government, with morality and religion; with the ſolidity of property; with peace and order; with civil and ſocial manners. All theſe (in their way) are good things too; and without them, liberty is not a benefit whilſt it laſts, and is not likely to continue long.

Theſe conſiderations, however, were below the dignity of the Revolution Society; but now that we

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are in a condition to diſcern the true nature of the object held up to our attention, their deſign of drawing us into an imitation of the National Aſſembly of France gives me a conſiderable degree of uneaſineſs.

II. *The nature of that example which the French have given us.*

Is our monarchy, after their example, to be annihilated, with all the laws, all the tribunals, and all the ancient corporations of the kingdom? Is every landmark of the country to be done away, in favour of a geometrical and arithmetical conſtitution? Is the Houſe of Lords to be voted uſeleſs? Is epiſcopacy to be aboliſhed? Are the church lands to be ſold to Jews and jobbers, or given to bribe new-invented municipal republics into a participation in ſacrilege? Are all the taxes to be voted grievances, and the revenue reduced to a patriotic contribution or patriotic preſents? Are ſilver ſhoe-buckles to be ſubſtituted in the place of the land tax and the malt tax for the ſupport of the naval ſtrength of this kingdom? Are all orders, ranks, and diſtinctions to be confounded, that univerſal anarchy may ariſe out of national Bankruptcy? For this great end is the army to be ſeduced from its diſcipline and its fidelity; firſt by every kind of debauchery, and then by the terrible precedent of a donative in the increaſe of pay? Are the curates to be ſeduced from their biſhops by holding out to them the deluſive hope of a dole out of the ſpoils of their own order? Are the citizens of London, like thoſe of Paris, to be drawn from

from their allegiance by feeding them at the expence of their fellow ſubjects? Is a compulſory paper currency to be ſubſtituted in the place of the legal coin of this kingdom? Is what remains of the plundered ſtock of public revenue, to be employed in the wild project of maintaining two armies to watch over and to fight with one another?—If theſe are the ends and means of the Revolution Society, I admit they are well aſſorted; and France may furniſh them for both with precedents in point.

I am no ſtranger to the faults and defects of the ſubverted government of France; but is it true, that the French government was ſuch as to be utterly incapable of reform? All France was of a different opinion in the beginning of the year 1789. The inſtructions to the repreſentatives of the States General, from every diſtrict in that kingdom, were filled with projects for the *reformation* of that government, without the remoteſt ſuggeſtion of *a deſign to deſtroy it.* The true queſtion at preſent is, whether thoſe who have deſtroyed, or thoſe who would have reformed, are in the right? Upon a free conſtitution there was but one opinion in France. All the ſtruggle, all the diſſention aroſe afterwards. The triumph of the victorious party was over the principle of a *Britiſh Conſtitution.*

1ſt. Reſpecting the Conſtitution of their Legiſlature.

We have a right therefore to expect that ſome very unuſual appearances of wiſdom will diſplay themſelves on the face of the deſigns of thoſe who

appeal to no practice, and who copy after no model. Has any ſuch been manifeſted? Let us examine, firſt, the Conſtitution of their Legiſlature. Here your new Conſtitution is the very reverſe of ours in its principle. The Member who goes to the National Aſſembly is not choſen by the people, nor accountable to them. There are three elections before he is choſen; two ſets of magiſtracy intervene between him and the Aſſembly; ſo that the whole ſpirit of election is changed, and there is no way to make a connection between the original conſtituent and the repreſentative. Every man who has ſerved in an aſſembly is ineligible for two years after. Juſt as theſe magiſtrates begin to learn their trade, they are diſqualified for exerciſing it. Your Conſtitution has too much of jealouſy to have much of ſenſe in it:— You conſider the breach of truſt in the repreſentative ſo principally, that you do not at all regard the queſtion of his fitneſs to execute it.

In order to ſecure a ſteady and moderate conduct in ſuch aſſemblies, it is neceſſary that the body of them ſhould be reſpectably compoſed, in point of condition of life, of permanent property, of education, and of ſuch habits as enlarge and liberalize the underſtanding. In the calling of the States General of France, the firſt thing which ſtruck me was a great departure from the ancient courſe. I found the repreſentation of the Third Eſtate, compoſed of ſix hundred perſons: they were equal in number to the repreſentation of both the other orders: now as the orders were not to act ſeparately, but to be melted down into one, the

policy of this numerous repreſentative became obvious; a very ſmall deſertion from either of the other two orders muſt throw the power of both into the hands of the third. In fact, the whole power of the State was ſoon reſolved into that body. But, it is anſwered, the repreſentation of twenty-four millions ought to prevail over two hundred thouſand. True; if the conſtitution of a kingdom be a problem of arithmetic. However, a government of five hundred country attornies and obſcure curates is not good for twenty-four millions of men, though it were choſen by eight millions; nor is it the better for being guided by a dozen of perſons of quality, who have betrayed their truſt in order to obtain that power; for ſuch in general is the compoſition of the governing majority of the National Aſſembly, which I can never conſider as any thing elſe than a voluntary aſſociation of men, who have availed themſelves of circumſtances to ſeize upon the power of the State, and in which is ſcarcely to be perceived the ſlighteſt traces of what we call the natural landed intereſt of the country.

This Aſſembly, which overthrows kings and kingdoms, has not even the phyſiognomy and aſpect of a grave legiſlative body; they act like the comedians of a fair before a riotous audience; they act amidſt the tumultuous cries of a mixed mob of ferocious men and of women loſt to ſhame, who, according to their inſolent fancies, direct, controul, applaud, explode them; and ſometimes mix and take their ſeats amongſt them. Who is it that admires

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and from the heart is attached to national repreſentative aſſemblies, but muſt turn with horror and diſguſt from ſuch a profane burleſque, and abominable perverſion of that ſacred inſtitute.

2. *Their Executive Power.*

Let us turn then our eyes to what they have done towards the formation of an executive power. For this they have choſen *a degraded king*. This their firſt executive officer is to be a machine without any ſort of deliberative diſcretion in any one act of his function. The King of France is not the fountain of juſtice. A thouſand times better it had been for this unappy prince if he had nothing at all to do with its adminiſtration; deprived as he is of all that is venerable and all that is conſolatory in that function, without a power of originating any proceſs; without a power of ſuſpenſion, mitigation, or pardon.

He is no more the fountain of honour, than he is of juſtice. All rewards, all diſtinctions are in other hands. He has no negative; yet his name and authority muſt be uſed to enforce every harſh decree. Nay, he muſt concur in the butchery of thoſe who ſhall attempt to free him from his impriſonment. A king, circumſtanced like the preſent, can have no generous intereſt to excite him to action. To inferior people ſuch an office might be a matter of honour—but to be raiſed to it, and to deſcend to it, are different things, and ſuggeſt different ſentiments.

Is the conduct of a war to be truſted to a man who may abhor its principle; who, in every ſtep he

takes to render it ſucceſsful, confirms the power of thoſe by whom he is oppreſſed? Will foreign States ſeriouſly treat with him who has no prerogative of peace or war? No, not ſo much as in a ſingle vote by himſelf, or his miniſters, or by any one whom he can poſſibly influence.

Does he *really* name the miniſters? they will have a ſympathy with him. Are they forced upon him? The whole buſineſs between them, and the nominal king will be mutual counteraction. The Miniſters of State in France are the only perſons in that country who are incapable of a ſhare in the national councils. What miniſters! what councils! what a nation!

3. *In their Judicature.*

As little genius and talent am I able to perceive in the plan of judicature formed by the National Aſſembly. Inſtead of imitating your monarchy, and ſeating your judges on a bench of independence, your object is to reduce them to the moſt blind obedience. As you have changed all things, you have invented new principles of order. You firſt appoint judges, who, I ſuppoſe, are to determine according to law, and then you let them know, that *at ſome time or other* you intend to give them ſome law by which they are to determine. Any ſtudies which they have made (if any they have made) are to be uſeleſs to them: they know not by what law they judge, nor under what authority they act, nor by what tenure they hold. They thus become complete, and

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moſt dangerous inſtruments in the hands of the governing power, which, in the midſt of a cauſe or on the proſpect of it, may wholly change the rule of deciſion.

4. *In their Army.*

Has more wiſdom been diſplayed in the conſtitution of your army, than what is diſcoverable in your plan of judicature? Truly it is not very eaſy to divine what that army may become at laſt. You have got the wolf by the ears, and I wiſh you joy of the happy poſition in which you have choſen to place yourſelves, and in which you are well circumſtanced for a free deliberation, relatively to that army, or to any thing elſe. You ſeem to have given the proviſional nomination of the officers, in the firſt inſtance, to the King, with a reſerve of approbation to the National Aſſembly. This double negotiation for military rank ſeems to me a contrivance as well adapted, as if it were ſtudied for no other end, to promote faction in the Aſſembly itſelf, relative to this vaſt military patronage; and then to poiſon the corps of officers with factions of a nature ſtill more dangerous to the ſafety of government, and deſtructive in the end to the efficiency of the army itſelf. Thoſe officers, who loſe the promotions, intended for them by the Crown, muſt become of a faction oppoſite to the Aſſembly. On the contrary, thoſe officers, who carry their point through an intereſt in the Aſſembly, muſt ſlight in the Crown an autho-

rity which would not advance and could not retard their promotion.

It is beſides to be conſidered, whether an Aſſembly like yours, is fit for promoting the obedience and diſcipline of an army. It is known that armies have hitherto yielded a very precarious and uncertain obedience to any ſenate or popular authority; and they will leaſt of all yield it to an aſſembly which is to have a continuance only of two years. In the weakneſs of one kind of authority and the fluctuation of all, the officers of an army will remain for ſome time mutinous and full of faction, until ſome popular General ſhall draw the eyes of all men upon himſelf. Armies will obey him on his perſonal account. There is no other way of ſecuring military obedience in this ſtate of thing. But the moment in which that event ſhall happen, *the perſon who really commands the army is your maſter.*

How came the Aſſembly by their preſent power over the army? Chiefly, to be ſure, by debauching the ſoldiers from their officers. They have begun by a moſt terrible operation. They have deſtroyed the principle of obedience; that ſubordination on which the whole military ſyſtem depends—the ſoldier is told, he is a citizen, and has the rights of man and citizen. The right of man, he is told, is to be his own governor, and to be ruled only by thoſe to whom he delegates that ſelf-government. It is very natural he ſhould think, that he ought, moſt of all, to have his choice where he is to yield the greateſt degree of obedience. The Secretary at

War

War informs the Aſſembly, with affected aſtoniſhment, that the regiments pay no regard to oaths. The Aſſembly then propoſe—what? more oaths. They renew decrees and proclamations as they experience their inefficiency, and they multiply oaths in proportion as they weaken, in the minds of men, the ſanctions of religion. I hope that handy abridgement of the excellent ſermons of Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, and Helvetius,* on the immortality of the ſoul, on a particular ſuperintending Providence, and on a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, are ſent down to the ſoldiers along with their civic oaths. Of this I have no doubt. All your reſolutions, all your proceedings, all your debates, all the works of your doctors in religion and politics are put into their hands, and you expect that they will apply to their own caſe juſt as much of your doctrines and examples as ſuits your pleaſure. This military aid can only laſt for a time, whilſt the impreſſion of the increaſe of pay remains, and the vanity of being umpires in all diſputes is flattered.

As to the municipal army or militia, which is to balance this national army, that is a monſter which, having neither coherency nor connection with the other parts of your ſyſtem, cannot fail to terminate its perplexed movements in ſome great national calamity.

Having concluded my few few remarks on the Conſtitution of the Supreme Power, the Executive, the Judicature, and the Military, I ſhall ſay ſomething of your revenue.

* Certain infidel writers.

5. In their Finance.

To fill up all the deficiencies in the old impoſitions, and the new deficiencies of every kind which were to be expected, what remained to a State without authority? The National Aſſembly called for a voluntary benevolence. What they obtained was ſomething more than could be rationally calculated, but what was far, indeed, from anſwerable to their real neceſſities, and much leſs to their fond expectations. At length the maſk is thrown off, and they are now trying to exact their benevolence by *force*.

The ſpoil of the church was now become the grand reſource of all their operations in finance. Money was no where to be ſeen. The Miniſter of Finance reiterated his call for a ſupply. Thus preſſed on all ſides, inſtead of paying the old debt, they contracted a new one, at 3 per cent. creating a new paper currency, called Aſſignats, founded on an eventual ſale of the church lands.

It was found neceſſary by all, even the moſt violent means, to put every individual on the ſame bottom, and to bind the nation in one guilty intereſt. In order, therefore, to force the moſt reluctant into a participation of their pillage, they rendered their paper circulation compulſory in all payments. With you a man can neither earn nor buy his dinner without a ſpeculation. What he receives in the morning will not have the ſame value at night. Induſtry muſt wither away. Œconomy muſt be driven from your country. Careful proviſion will have no exiſtence.

tence. Who will labour without knowing the amount of his pay? Who will ſtudy to increaſe what none can eſtimate? Who will accumulate when he does not know the value of what he ſaves?

The truly melancholy part of thus ſyſtematically making a nation of gameſters is this, that *though all are forced to play, few can underſtand the game.* And I have no doubt, that if this monſter of a Conſtitution can continue, France will be wholly governed by the agitators in corporations, by ſocieties in the towns formed of directors of aſſignats, and truſtees for the ſale of church lands, attornies, agents, money-jobbers, ſpeculators, and adventurers, compoſing an ignoble conſpiracy, founded on the deſtruction of the Crown, the Church, the Nobility, and the People.

It is not the confiſcation of our church property, from this example in France, that I dread, though I think this would be no trifling evil. The great ſource of my ſolicitude is, leſt it ever ſhould be conſidered in England, as the policy of a State, to ſeek reſource in confiſcations *of any kind*; or that any one deſcription of citizens ſhould be brought to regard any of the others as their proper prey. Nations are wading deeper and deeper into an ocean of boundleſs debt. Public debts, which at firſt were a ſecurity to Governments by intereſting many in the public tranquillity, are likely, in their exceſs, to become the means of their ſubverſion. If Governments provide for theſe debts by heavy impoſitions, they periſh by becoming odious to the people: if

they do not provide for them, they will be undone by the efforts of the moſt dangerous of all parties, I mean an extenſive, diſcontented *money intereſt*, injured, but not deſtroyed.

III. *The two Parties who have brought about the Revolution in that Country.*

Along with the monied intereſt in France, a new deſcription of men had grown up, with whom that intereſt ſoon formed a cloſe and marked union; I mean the political *Men of Letters*. Men of letters, fond of diſtinguiſhing themſelves, are rarely averſe to innovation. This literary cabal had ſome years ago formed ſomething like a regular plan *for the deſtruction of the Chriſtian Religion*. What was not to be done towards their great end, by any direct or immediate act, might be wrought by a longer proceſs through the medium of opinion. The world had done them juſtice, and in favour of general talents, forgave the evil tendency of their peculiar principles. This was true liberality; which they returned, by endeavouring to confine the reputation of ſenſe, learning, and taſte, to themſelves or their followers. To this ſyſtem of literary monopoly was joined an unremitting induſtry to blacken and diſcredit, in every way, and by every means, all thoſe who did not hold to their faction. To thoſe who have obſerved the ſpirit of their conduct, it had been long clear that nothing was wanted but the power of carrying the intolerance of the tongue and pen into a perſecution which would ſtrike at property, liberty, and life. The iſſue of the whole was, that what with

with oppoſition, and what with ſucceſs, a violent and malignant zeal of a kind hitherto unknown, took entire poſſeſſion of their minds. The reſources of intrigue were called in, to ſupply the defects of argument and wit; and as controverſial zeal ſoon turns its thoughts on force, they began to inſinuate themſelves into a correſpondence with foreign princes; in hopes, through their authority, which at firſt they flattered, to bring about the changes they had in view. The correſpondence between this cabal and the late King of Pruſſia, will throw no ſmall light on their proceedings. For the ſame purpoſe for which they intrigued with princes, they cultivated in a diſtinguiſhed manner the *monied intereſt* of France.

They who will not believe that the philoſophical fanatics who guide in theſe matters entertain a deſign of utterly aboliſhing the Chriſtian religion, whenever the minds of men are prepared for this laſt ſtroke againſt it, by bringing its Miniſters into univerſal contempt, are utterly ignorant of their character and proceedings. Theſe enthuſiaſts do not ſcruple to to avow their opinion, that a ſtate can ſubſiſt without any Religion better than with one; and that they are able to ſupply the place of any good which may be in it, by a ſort of education, the ſcheme of which has been long known. Of late they diſtinguiſh it by the name of *a Civic Education*; but its tendency is to form a new race of ſavages in Chriſtian countries.

As theſe two kinds of men, *(the literary and monied intereſt)* appear principal leaders in all the late tranſactions, their junction and politics will ſerve to account for the general fury with which all the landed property of eccleſiaſtical corporations has been attacked, and the great care, which contrary to their principles has been taken of a monied intereſt originating from the authority of the Crown.

We cannot be ignorant of the ſpirit of atheiſtical fanaticiſm, inſpired by a multitude of writings, diſperſed with incredible aſſiduity and expence, and by ſermons delivered in all the ſtreets and places of public reſort in Paris. Theſe writings and ſermons have filled the populace with a black and ſavage atrocity of mind, which ſuperſedes in them the common feeling of morality and religion.

The ſpirit of proſelytiſm attends this ſpirit of fanaticiſm. They have ſocieties to cabal and correſpond at home and abroad for the propagation of their tenets. The republic of Berne, one of the happieſt, the moſt proſperous, and the beſt governed countries upon earth, is one of the great objects, at the deſtruction of which they aim. I am told they have in ſome meaſure ſucceeded in ſowing there the ſeeds of diſcontent. They are buſy throughout Germany. Spain and Italy have not been untried. *England* is not left out of the comprehenſive ſcheme of their malignant charity; and in England we find thoſe who ſtretch out their arms to them, who recommend their examples from more than one pulpit, and who chooſe in more than one periodical meeting, publicly to correſpond with them, to applaud them,

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and to hold them up as objects of imitation, who ſuggeſt to them leagues of perpetual amity, *at the very time* when the governing powers of their country may find it expedient *to make war upon them.*

In ſuch a ſtate of things, we ought to hold ourſelves upon our guard: the beginnings of confuſion with us in England, are at preſent feeble enough, but whenever our neighbour's houſe is on fire, it cannot be amiſs for the engines to play a little on our own.

IV. *The wild notions of their followers in England.*

On the forenoon of the 4th of November, 1789, Dr. Richard Price, a non-conforming miniſter of eminence, preached to the above-mentioned Revolution Society, at the diſſenting meeting-houſe in the Old Jewry, a very extraordinary miſcellaneous ſermon. That ſermon is in a ſtrain which, I believe, has not been heard in this kingdom in any of the pulpits which are tolerated and encouraged in it, ſince the year 1648, when a predeceſſor of Dr. Price, the Rev. Hugh Peters, made the King's own chapel at St. James's ring with the honour and privilege of the Saints; who, "with the high praiſes of God in their mouths, and a two-edged ſword in their hands, were to execute judgement on the heathen, and puniſhments upon the people; to bind their Kings with chains, and their Nobles with fetters of iron." Few harangues from the pulpit ever breathed leſs of the ſpirit of moderation, than the lecture in the

the Old Jewry. Suppoſing, however, that ſomething like moderation were viſible in this political ſermon; yet politics and the pulpit are terms that have little agreement. Surely the church is a place where one day's truce ought to be allowed to the diſſenſions and animoſities of mankind.

1. *Affecting our Civil Conſtitution.*

The doctrines of this political divine affect our Conſtitution in its vital parts. He aſſerts that by the principles of the Revolution of 1688, the people of England have acquired three fundamental rights; namely, that we have acquired a right,

1ſt. To chooſe our own Governors;

2d. To caſhier them for miſconduct;

3d. To frame a Government for ourſelves.

This new and hitherto unheard-of Bill of Rights, though made in the name of the whole people of England, belongs to theſe gentlemen, and their faction only. The body of the Engliſh nation have no ſhare in it; they utterly diſclaim it. They are bound to do ſo by the laws of their country, made at the time of that very Revolution, which is appealed to by the Society which abuſes its name.

If the principles of the Revolution are any where to be found, it is in the Statute called the Declaration of Right. In that moſt wiſe, ſober, and conſiderate declaration, drawn up by great Lawyers and great Stateſmen, and not by warm and inexperienced enthuſiaſts, not one word is ſaid, nor one ſuggeſtion made, of a general right to chooſe our own governors.

nors. At no time, perhaps, did the ſovereign Legiſlature manifeſt a more tender regard to that fundamental principle of Britiſh policy, *an hereditary ſucceſſion*, than at the time of the Revolution. The Crown was carried ſomewhat out of the line in which it had before moved; but the new line was derived from the ſame ſtock. It was ſtill a kind of hereditary deſcent qualified with Proteſtantiſm. When the Legiſlature altered the direction, but kept the principle, they ſhewed that they held it inviolable. All this precaution proves to a demonſtration, how totally adverſe the wiſdom of the nation was to turning a caſe of neceſſity into a rule of law.

The *ſecond* claim of the Revolution Society is, a right of caſhiering our governors for miſconduct. No government could ſtand a moment if it could be blown down with any thing ſo looſe and indefinite as an opinion of miſconduct. They who led at the Revolution grounded the virtual abdication of King James upon no ſuch light and uncertain principle. They charged him with nothing leſs than a deſign to ſubvert the Proteſtant Church and State. This was ſomething more than miſconduct. Their truſt for the future preſervation of the State was not in future revolutions. The grand policy of all their regulations was to render it almoſt impracticable for any future Sovereign to compel the States of the kingdom to have again recourſe to thoſe violent remedies. In order to lighten the Crown they aggravated reſponſibility on miniſters of State: beſides, this ceremony of caſhiering Kings, of which theſe

gentlemen

gentlemen talk ſo much at their eaſe, can rarely, if ever, be performed without force: it then becomes a caſe of war, and not of Conſtitution. Government muſt be abuſed and deranged indeed, before it can be thought of; then the nature of the diſeaſe muſt indicate the remedy; but with or without right, a Revolution will be the very laſt reſource of the thinking and the good.

The *third* head of right, namely, the Right to form a Government for ourſelves, has, at leaſt, as little countenance from any thing done at the Revolution, as the two firſt of their claims. The very idea of the fabrication of a new government, is enough to fill us with diſguſt and horror. We wiſhed at the period of the Revolution, and do now wiſh, to derive all that we poſſeſs as an inheritance from our forefathers; well knowing that, without an hereditary government, we can have no hereditary right to any thing. To the people of England, the idea of inheritance furniſhes a ſure principle of conſervation, and a ſure principle of tranſmiſſion, without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquiſition free; but it ſecures what it acquires. All the reformations we have hitherto made have proceeded on the principle of reference to antiquity; and I hope, nay, I am perſuaded, that all thoſe which poſſibly may be formed hereafter, will be carefully formed upon analogical precedent, authority, and example.

But it is in vain to talk to theſe gentlemen of authority and example. They have a mine that will blow up at one grand exploſion all precedents, charters, and Acts of Parliament. They have the "*rights of men.*" Againſt theſe, their rights of men, let no government look for ſecurity in the length of its continuance, or in the juſtice and lenity of its adminiſtration. The objections of theſe ſpeculatiſts, if its forms do not quadrate with their theories, are as valid againſt ſuch an old and beneficial government, as againſt the moſt violent tyranny or the greeneſt uſurpation.

Far am I from denying in theory; full as far is my heart from withholding in practice, (if I were of power to give or withhold) the *real* rights of men. In denying their falſe claims, I do not mean to injure thoſe which are real, and which are ſuch as their pretended rights would totally deſtroy. By having a right to every thing, men want every thing. Government is a contrivance of human wiſdom to provide for human wants. Among theſe wants is to be reckoned a want, out of civil ſociety, of a ſufficient reſtraint upon their paſſions. This can only be done by a power out of themſelves; and not in the exerciſe of its functions, ſubject to that will, and thoſe paſſions which it is its office to bridle and ſubdue. But as the liberties and reſtrictions vary with times and circumſtances, and admit of infinite modifications, they are not to be ſettled

upon any abſtract rule; and it is as fooliſh to diſcuſs them upon that principle, as it would be to diſcuſs a man's abſtract right to food and to medicine.

3 *The common feelings of humanity.*

The worſt of theſe politics of revolution is this, they temper and harden the breaſt, in order to prepare it for the deſperate ſtrokes which are ſometimes uſed in extreme occaſions.

This ſort of people are ſo taken up with their theories about the *Rights* of man, that they have totally forgot his *nature*. The famous ſermon of the Old Jewry breathes nothing but this ſpirit through the whole of it. Plots, maſſacres, aſſaſſinations, ſeem to ſome people a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. The preacher found them all in the French Revolution; his enthuſiaſm kindles as he advances, and when he arrives at his peroration, he breaks out into the following rapture:

"What an eventful period is this! I am happy "that I have lived to ſee it. I could almoſt ſay, "*Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for* "*mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* I have lived to "ſee a diffuſion of knowledge, which has under-"mined ſuperſtition and error. I have lived to ſee "thirty millions of people, indignant and reſolute, "ſpurning at ſlavery, and demanding liberty with an "irreſiſtible voice; their King led in triumph, and "an arbitrary monarch ſurrendering himſelf to his "ſubjects."

Before

Before I proceed farther, I have to remark, that Dr. Price ſeems rather to over value the great acquiſitions of light which he has obtained and diffuſed in this age. The laſt century had, though in a different place, a triumph as memorable as that of Dr. Price. On the trial of the Rev. Hugh Peters for high treaſon, it was depoſed, that when King Charles was brought to London for his trial, the apoſtle of liberty in that day conducted the triumph. "*I ſaw,*" ſays the witneſs, "*his Majeſty in the coach with ſix horſes, and Peters riding before the King triumphing.*" Dr. Price, when he talks as if he had made a diſcovery, only follows a precedent; for after the commencement of the King's trial, this ſame Dr. Peters, concluding a long prayer at the Royal Chapel at Whitehall, (he had very triumphantly choſen his place) ſaid, "I have prayed and preached theſe twenty-years, and now I may ſay, with old Simeon, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.*" Peters had not the fruits of his prayer, for he neither departed ſo ſoon as he wiſhed, nor in peace. He became (what I heartily hope none of his followers may be in this country) himſelf a ſacrifice to the triumph he led as pontiff.

I find a preacher of the goſpel, profaning the beautiful and prophetic ejaculation, commonly called, "*nunc dimittis,*" made on the firſt preſentation of our Saviour in the temple, and applying it with unnatural rapture to the moſt horrid, atrocious, and afflicting ſpectacle, that ever was exhibited to the pity and in-

dignation of mankind. This *leading in triumph*, (a thing in its beſt form unmanly and irreligious) which fills our preacher with ſuch unhallowed tranſports, muſt ſhock, I believe, the moral taſte of every well-born mind. Several Engliſh were the ſtupified and indignant ſpectators of that triumph. It was (unleſs we have been ſtrangely deceived) a ſpectacle more reſembling a proceſſion of American ſavages, entering into Onondaga, after ſome of their murders, called victories, and leading into hovels hung round with ſcalps, their captives overpowered with the ſcolds and buffets of women as ferocious as themſelves, much more than it reſembled the triumphal pomp of a civilized nation.—If a civilized nation, or any man who had a ſenſe of generoſity, were capable of a perſonal triumph over the fallen and afflicted.

4. *Our Religious Eſtabliſhment.*

At firſt I was at a loſs to account for this fit of unguarded tranſport, till I recollected the Io Pæan of this memorable triumph; I mean the animating cry which called for "*all the biſhops to be hanged on the lamp-poſts.*"

However, the cabals here, who take a ſort of ſhare in your tranſactions, are yet but a handful of people. In England, moſt of us conceive that it is *envy and malignity*, and not a love of the ſelf-denial and mortification of the ancient church, which makes ſome look aſkance at the diſtinctions, and honours, and revenues, which, taken from no perſon, are ſet apart for

for learning and virtue. The ears of the people of England are diſtinguiſhing; they hear theſe men ſpeak broad. Their tongues betray them. Their language is the cant and gibberiſh of hypocriſy. The people of England muſt think ſo, when theſe praters affect to carry back the clergy to that primitive evangelic poverty, and which in the ſpirit, ought always to exiſt in them, but in the thing muſt be varied, when manners, when modes of life, when indeed the whole order of human affairs, has undergone a total revolution.

Beſides the body of the Engliſh nation know, and what is better, feel inwardly, that religion is the baſis of civil ſociety.

If our religious tenets ſhould ever want a farther elucidation, we ſhall not call on *atheiſm* to explain them. If our eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment ſhould want reviſion, it is not *avarice or rapacity*, public or private, that we ſhall employ for the audit, receipt, or application of its conſecrated revenue.

It is from their attachment to a church eſtabliſhment, that the Engliſh nation did not think it wiſe to entruſt that great fundamental intereſt to the unſteady and precarious contribution of individuals. They go further; they certainly never have ſuffered, and never will ſuffer the fixed eſtate of the church to be converted into *a penſion*, to depend on the treaſury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps extinguiſhed, by difficulties which may be pretended for political purpoſes, and are in fact, often brought on by the extravagance, negligence, and rapacity of politicians. The people of England think they have conſtitutional

motives, as well as religious, for not turning their independent clergy into penſioners of ſtate. They tremble for their liberty from the influence of a clergy dependent on the crown; they tremble for the public tranquillity from the diſorders of a factious clergy, if it were made to depend upon any other than the crown. They, therefore, made their church, like their king and nobility, independent.

On theſe ideas, inſtead of quarrelling with eſtabliſhments, as ſome do, who have made a philoſophy and religion of their hoſtility to them, we cleave cloſely to them. *Church and State* are ideas inſeparable in our minds; and ſcarcely is the one mentioned without mentioning the other. We are reſolved to keep an eſtabliſhed Church; an eſtabliſhed monarchy; an eſtabliſhed ariſtocracy; an eſtabliſhed democracy.

V. *The true policy of this country at the preſent juncture.*

On the whole; I wiſh my countrymen rather to recommend to our neighbours the example of the Britiſh Conſtitution, than to take models from them for the improvement of our own. In the former, they have got an invaluable treaſure. I would not exclude alteration neither; but even when I changed, it ſhould be to preſerve. In what I did, I would follow the example of our anceſtors. I would make the reparation, as nearly as poſſible, in the ſtyle of the building. A politic caution, a guarded circumcumſpection, a moral, rather than a complexional timidity,

timidity, were among the ruling principles of our forefathers, in their moſt decided conduct. Let us imitate their caution, if we wiſh to deſerve their fortune, or to retain their bequeſts. Let us *add*, if we pleaſe; but let us *preſerve* what they have left; and, ſtanding on firm ground, let us be ſatisfied to admire, rather than attempt to follow, in their deſperate flights, the aeronauts of France.

VI. *Concluſion.*

I have little to recommend my opinions, but long obſervation and much impartiality. They come from one who wiſhes to preſerve conſiſtency; but who would preſerve conſiſtency by *varying his means to ſecure the unity of his end:* and, when the veſſel in which he ſails may be endangered, by overloading it on one ſide, is deſirous of carrying the ſmall weight of his reaſons to that which may preſerve its equipoiſe.

THE END.

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